**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

Claims 1 to 16. (Canceled).

17. (Currently Amended)  A method for releasing a data processing unit for processing project data of a project; comprising:

requesting usage permission for using the data processing unit to process project data belonging to a predetermined project, the predetermined project data being cryptographically protected;

transmitting the predetermined, cryptographically protected project data via a communication network to a usage-permission generating device;

generating a first signature by signing the predetermined, cryptographically protected project data belonging to the project, the predetermined, cryptographically protected project data being signed by the usage-permission generating device;

verifying the first signature for correctness;

releasing the data processing unit to process the project data belonging to the project if the first signature is verified as correct; and

assigning a client a plurality of value units for the release of the data processing unit for multiple projects, wherein the plurality of value units are devalued <u>at a usage permission generating device</u> in response to a request [[by the client]] <u>generated under usage of the verified first client signature for a usage right</u>.

18. (Previously Presented)  The method as recited in claim 16, further comprising:

generating a second signature by signing the predetermined project data;

transmitting the predetermined project data and the second signature to the usage-permission generating device;

verifying the second signature for correctness; and

the first signature is generated from the predetermined project data only if the second signature verified as correct.

19. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 17, further comprising:

generating a second signature by signing the predetermined, cryptographically protected project data;

transmitting the predetermined, cryptographically protected project data and the second signature to the usage-permission generating device;

verifying the second signature for correctness; and

generating the first signature from the predetermined, cryptographically protected project data only if the second signature is correct.

20. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 15, further comprising generating an invoice data record for usage of the data processing unit for the client as a function of the predetermined project data.

21. (Canceled).

22. (Currently Amended) A communication system for releasing a data processing unit for processing project data of a selected project, comprising:

a computer assigned to a client;

a data processing unit implemented in the computer;

a memory device, the memory device being a part of data processing unit and in which predetermined project data of at least one project to be processed are stored;

a memory assigned to the computer in which at least one value unit for release, with costs, of the data processing unit for processing project data of at least one selected project is stored for at least one client;

a device for devaluing the at least one value unit; and

a usage-permission generating device assigned to the computer, the usage-permission generating device including:

a first device for generating a first signature from the predetermined project data of a selected project,

wherein the computer has a device for verifying the first signature and for releasing the data processing unit, which releases the data processing unit for processing the project data

belonging to the selected project only if the first signature is determined correct <u>and for which predefined value units are available as assigned for the release of the data processing unit, wherein the plurality of value units are devalued in response to a request by the client for a usage right</u>.

23. (Previously Presented) The communication system as recited in claim 22, further comprising:

a first interface associated with the computer, the interface being used for connection to a communication network;

a device associated with the computer for cryptographically protecting the predetermined project data; and

a second interface associated with the usage-permission generating device, the interface being used for connection to a communication network so that the first signature can be transmitted via the communication network to the computer.

24. (Previously Presented) The communication network as recited in claim 22, wherein the computer is assigned a second signature device for generating a second signature from the predetermined project data; the computer is designed for transmitting the second signature and the associated, predetermined project data via a communication network to the usage-permission generating device; and further comprising:

a second device for verifying the second signature, the second device being associated with the usage-permission generating device, wherein the first signature device generates the first signature only if the second signature is determined correct.

25. (Previously Presented) The communication network as recited in claim 23, wherein the computer is assigned a second signature device for generating a second signature from the predetermined, cryptographically protected project data; the computer is designed for transmitting the second signature and the associated, predetermined, cryptographically protected project data via the communication network to the usage-permission generating device; and further comprising:

a second device for verifying the second signature, the second device being associated with the usage-permission generating device, wherein the first signature device generates the first signature only if the second signature is determined correct.

26. (Previously Presented)  The communication system as recited in claim 22, further comprising:

a device for generating an invoice data record for the client for usage of the data processing unit as a function of the predetermined project data of a selected project.

27. (Previously Presented)  The communication system as recited in claim 22, wherein the usage-permission generating device is a chip card in which the first signature device is implemented and which is able to generate a predetermined number of first signatures; and further comprising:

a chip card reader assigned to the computer.

28. (Canceled).